

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 5239

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, MX

SUBJ: ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS: COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
ON FONSEC NOTE RE BRACEROS

REF: MEXICO 5131, 5172

1. WHILE EMBASSY HAS NO REAL REASON TO DOUBT THAT RABASA'S MOTIVATION IN SENDING NOTE WAS THE ONE HE ADVANCED IN CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR REPORTED MEXICO 5131, IT STILL SEEMED A FLIMSY EXCUSE. HIS EMPLOYMENT OF THIS TACTIC CRITICAL OF USG -- HOWEVER ELEVATED THE NOTE'S LANGUAGE -- AS A DEVICE TO UNDERMINE DOMESTIC CRITICS IS, OF COURSE, TO BE DEPLORED. POINTS RAISED IN NOTE, HOWEVER, ARE THOSE REPEATED BY GOM IN MANY FORA OVER PAST TWO YEARS AND SEEM TO HAVE FULL SUPPORT WITHIN INTERESTED SECTORS OF GOM AND FROM MEXICAN PUBLIC AT LARGE. FOR THIS REASON, EMBASSY BELIEVES IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE NOT TO RESPOND PROMPTLY IN FRIENDLY BUT FIRM MANNER, PUBLICIZING U.S. POSITION, TO AVOID LEAVING IMPRESSION THAT U.S. CONCURS IN PREMISES OR PARTICULARS OF RABASA'S NOTE. EMBASSY SUGGESTS THAT OUR EVENTUAL NOTE OF RESPONSE OR A PRESS RELEASE INCORPORATING SALIENT POINTS BE RELEASED TO PRESS AT TIME OF NOTE'S DELIVERY, IN SAME FASHION AS FONSEC ISSUED PRESS RELEASE WHEN HIS NOTE SENT TO EMBASSY.

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2. AFTER SENDING NOTE, FONSEC RABASA TALKED WITH AMBASSADOR

AT RECEPTION FOR UNCTAD DELEGATES EVENING OF JUNE 19. HE STRESSED POINT THAT HE DRAFTED NOTE WITH POSITIVE TONE, REFERRING INITIALLY TO SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF SALINITY PROBLEM AND THAT MORE CRITICAL PORTIONS RELATING TO BRACERO ISSUE WERE BALANCED AND COUCHED IN ELEVATED LANGUAGE.

3. FONSEC NOTE (PARA 9, MEXICO 5172) CLEARLY SEEKS TO CREATE IMPRESSION THAT GOM HAS APPROACHED BRACERO PROBLEM IN EARNEST, CONSCIENTIOUS, AND STUDIOUS FASHION WHILE USG HAS LIMITED ITSELF TO "TAKING NOTE". AS DEPARTMENT KNOWS, SUCH IMPRESSION WOULD BE MISLEADING. AT THE JULY 1973 MEETING IN WASHINGTON OF AD HOC GROUPS ESTABLISHED BY RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS TO CONSIDER ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT ISSUE, MEXICAN GROUP PROVIDED RESULTS OF ITS STUDY ONLY UPON REQUEST OF USG AND AFTER CONSULTING WITH FONSEC, AND WITH CAVEAT THAT MEXICAN STUDY NOT BE MADE PUBLIC. U.S. GROUP, ON OTHER HAND, MADE RESULTS OF ITS STUDY (SO-CALLED CRAMTON REPORT, EQUALLY CONSCIENTIOUS AND THOROUGH) FREELY AVAILABLE TO GOM WITHOUT RESTRAINTS AS TO PUBLIC RELEASE.

4. GOM REQUEST FOR "GREATER REPRESENTATION" FOR MEXICAN CONSULAR OFFICERS VIS-A-VIS MEXICAN MIGRATORY WORKERS IS SOMEWHAT MISLEADING AND EVEN SPECIOUS. AS DEPARTMENT KNOWS, GOM DELAYED FOR MONTHS AFTER U.S. INVITED PRESENCE OF CONSULAR OFFICERS AT DETENTION CENTERS BEFORE ACTUALLY ASSIGNING OFFICERS TO THIS DUTY. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF ON JUNE 17, FONSEC DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR CONSULAR AFFAIRS AGUILAR SPOKE WITH HIGH PRAISE OF FACILITIES U.S. HAD PROVIDED FOR MEXICAN CONSULS AT DETENTION CENTERS. AGUILAR ADDED THAT IN HIS VIEW, COMPLAINTS CONCERNING MISTREATMENT AT DETENTION CENTERS WERE UNWARRANTED EXCEPT IN A FEW ISOLATED CASES. EMBASSY BELIEVES IT WOULD BE UNWISE TO ALLOW ASSERTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF MISTREATMENT IN DETENTION CENTERS ("EXCESSIVELY RIGOROUS TREATMENT", IN FONSEC'S NOTE) STAND UNCHALLENGED. WHEN EMBASSY HAS IN PAST CHALLENGED SUCH ASSERTIONS AND REQUESTED SUBSTANTIATION OF ALLEGATIONS OF MISTREATMENT, FOREIGN SECRETARIAT HAS REMAINED MUTE. (EMBASSY BELIEVES IT WORTHWHILE TO CONSIDER CHANGING NAME OF "DETENTION CENTERS" TO "REPATRIATION CENTERS".)

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5. CRUX OF THIS TROUBLESOME ISSUE CLEARLY LIES FIRST IN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GOM AND USG OVER WHETHER THERE IS A NEED FOR MEXICAN TEMPORARY WORKERS IN U.S., AND SECOND IN GOM UNWILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT OR GIVE CREDENCE TO OPPOSITION TO NEW BRACERO PROGRAM WITHIN SIGNIFICANT SECTORS OF U.S. SOCIETY.

6. EMBASSY BELIEVES RESPONSE TO NOTE SHOULD ADDRESS

FOLLOWING POINTS:

A. USG IS SINCERELY AND VERY SERIOUSLY CONCERNED WITH PROBLEM OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS FROM MEXICO, WHICH HAS ALMOST REACHED PROPORTIONS OF MASSIVE POPULATION TRANSFER, WITNESS REMOVAL OF OVER 600,000 MEXICAN ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS LAST YEAR, AND USG HAS BEEN AND REMAINS MOST INTERESTED IN RESOLVING THIS PROBLEM; RESPONSE MIGHT WELL NOTE ELEMENT OF RECIPROCITY IN THAT MEXICO (AND OTHER COUNTRIES) HAVE LAWS GOVERNING ADMISSION OF NON-CITIZEN WORKERS;

B. DETENTION CENTERS (WHATEVER THEIR NAME) ARE NECESSARY AND PRACTICAL ASSEMBLY POINTS FOR ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS BEING REMOVED FROM U.S.; CENTERS ARE EXPENSIVE AND REMOVAL PROCEDURE PER SE IS DISTASTEFUL, BUT NUMBERS OF ILLEGALS WHICH MUST BE PROCESSED REQUIRE SUCH CENTERS;

C. USG CONSIDERS TREATMENT OF ILLEGALS IN DETENTION CENTERS FAIR AND HUMANE; IF GOM IS AWARE OF SPECIFIC CASES OF ABUSE, USG WOULD WELCOME INFORMATION DOCUMENTING SUCH CASES IN ORDER THAT REMEDIAL ACTION MIGHT BE TAKEN;

D. CONTRARY TO GOM VIEW, DATA AVAILABLE TO USG DOES NOT SUPPORT CONTENTION THAT THERE IS SIGNIFICANT DEMAND FOR MEXICAN MIGRATORY WORKERS IN AGRICULTURE OR ELSEWHERE IN U.S. LABOR MARKET; THERE ARE, IN FACT, RECURRENT STRONG COMPLAINTS FROM INTERESTED AND KNOWLEDGEABLE SECTORS WITHIN U.S. THAT ACCOMMODATION OF MEXICAN ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT WORKERS IS AT EXPENSE AND TO DETRIMENT OF U.S. WORKERS (EMBASSY HAS IN MIND ON THIS POINT RECENT STRONG COMMENTS OF CHICANO LEADERS PADILLA - SEE MEXICO 4576 - AND CESAR CHAVEZ ON ILLEGALS PROBLEM);

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E. WE SHOULD EARNESTLY SOLICIT SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE BY GOM IN PREVENTING ILLEGAL ENTRY INTO U.S. OF MEXICAN CITIZENS IN ORDER TO ELIMINATE PROBLEM WHICH IS OF INCREASING CONCERN TO BOTH COUNTRIES. THIS POINT MIGHT BE STRENGTHENED BY SOME INDICATION THAT, IF MASSIVE VOLUME OF ILLEGALS' ENTRY AND CONTINUED PRESENCE IN U.S. WERE REDUCED, MODERATE TEMPORARY WORKER PROGRAM UNDER "H" VISA PROCEDURES COULD BE CONSIDERED, DEPENDING UPON U.S. NEEDS.

7. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT U.S. RESPONSE SHOULD BE PROMPT BUT DELIBERATE, FIRM BUT FRIENDLY IN TONE. ASSUME DEPARTMENT IS PREPARING DRAFT RESPONSE WHICH MUST, OF COURSE, BE COORDINATED WITH INTERESTED AGENCIES IN WASHINGTON. PLEASE ADVISE.
JOVA

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